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ABSTRACT

Realistic spoken discourse, as it actually is used in real-life situations, would not be acceptable in the written medium: the established conventions of the written medium are not adequately equipped to convey the phonological subtleties and undertones of speech. Novelists use dialogue to imitate or mirror reality, but writing carries with it such different expectations and alternative realizations than speech and, as a consequence, fictional dialogue is necessarily different from spoken discourse. This article uses phasal analysis, i.e. the study of simultaneous, ideational, and interpersonal and textual encodings in text, to compare casual conversation and fictional dialogue to examine how prominent Canadian authors have selectively condensed the essence of real talk to create the illusion of authenticity. Phasal analysis also shows how dialogue is organized beyond the sentence, and structured even beyond the graphological conventions with which authors generally comply. (Contains 20 references.) (JL)

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Prose Dialogue and Discourse

by Karen Malcolm

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PROSE DIALOGUE AND DISCOURSE

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1. Introduction

Although Salinger's dialogue in Catcher in the Rye has been acclaimed as a reproduction of 'authentic' teenage idiom, Salinger himself wrote "I wouldn't dream of using what people actually say for dialogue in novels ... nobody would believe it" (Wilson 1985: 249). Spoken discourse would most certainly be unacceptable in the written medium. Nor are the established conventions of the written medium equipped adequately to convey the phonological subtleties and undertones of speech. Novelists use dialogue to imitate or mirror reality, to create the illusion of 'real' life and 'real' people, but writing carries with it such different expectations and alternative realizations than speech, as a consequence of the different relationships it involves, that it is not at all surprising how different, and how necessarily different, fictional dialogue is from spoken discourse.

The relative spontaneity of casual conversation carries with it numerous stylistic repercussions. Decoders who share much of the same gnostology[1] as their encoders (see Gregory 1984) seem to have little difficulty in ignoring any infelicities and arriving at perfectly acceptable interpretations (see Malcolm 1985). A single word, a pregnant pause can convey a wealth of meaning to one

who is coming from a common experience. And strangers, who share the same communicator's communicating context, need only a little more structure and completeness, with the occasional gloss, to intepret what has been intended. Yet someone trying to decipher a transcription of ordinary talk might end up hopelessly muddled, unable to get beyond the numerous grammatical irregularities, or bored, by the numerous repetitions that are necessary to communicate a message which would otherwise be over, and perhaps lost to the inattentive listener, in fractions of seconds.

Fictional dialogue does not have the luxury of phonological innuendo, or maximum communication with minimal verbalization as a consequence of gnostological sharing. Although Chothia (1979:8) writes about dramatic dialogue, his words are still relevant to its fictional counterpart "it operates by duplicity: it is not spontaneous, but must appear to be so. It is permanent, but must appear as ephemeral as the speech it imitates ... In sharing the convention the audience (reader) has a share in the duplicity. We simultaneously accept the illusion of spontaneity and know that it is a pretense". Dialogue has to be self-explanatory and self-contained, shorter and surer of its effects, denser, more memorable. The linguistic peculiarities which would 'reproduce' speech may take second place to the overall fictional purpose of the passage.

In real life the spoken word gets much of its meaning from its situation, and the way it is said. As Page (1973: 8 & 9) writes, "the writer must select and draw attention to particular features that are relevant from the fictional situation ... and punctuation is a crude way of conveying pause, tempo, stress,

intonation, volume, and twenty-six letters of the alphabet can scarcely represent the infinite variety and subtlety of spelling". Authors 'represent' speech by intersposing the elaborate code of 'writing to be read' with 'speech markers': hesitation, pause, unfinished sentences, a sudden change of direction, a lively confusion of metaphors, the rushing of one thought into another, the cutting in of one speaker on another's words, as well as certain fashionable idioms, and certain idiosyncracies of construction. The balancing act is an uneasy one: just enough orthographic innovation to approximate a particular character's fictional geographic, temporal and social provenance, but not so much as to confound the reader, and distract him/her from plot development.

So the dilemma of the writer is to create using one medium a facsimile of another (which would be far too wasteful and disorganized to reproduce), to artificially arrange elaborate echoes of the living language in an evocative, suggestive and concentrated way to make us believe that what we hear is a natural utterance.

Burton (1980: 7), Wilson (1985: ix), Frye (1957: 10), Hendricks (1976: 7), and Chothia (1979: 9) acknowledge the difficulties dialogue has presented stylisticians. However, in recent years, discourse analysts, ethnographers, and linguists have come to a more detailed understanding of the very complicated nature of real speech that sheds light on dialogue studies (for example, see Burton's conversational structures 1980: 10-23).

2. Analysis

The purpose of this paper was to take another step in the comparison between discourse: casual conversation specifically, and dialogue: prose dialogue. A step that the introduction of Communication Linguistics and its descriptive methodology: phasal analysis in 1981 by Gregory and Malcolm made possible. Communication Linguistics, a development of Hallidays' systemics model, also incorporated insights from Pike's tagmemics, Lamb's stratificational grammar, and Fleming's communicative model. Phasal analysis first occurred to Gregory and Malcolm when they noticed naturally-occurring chunks of tri-functional consistency emerging from their semological[2] and morphosyntactical[3] analyses of several texts of child discourse (1981). The children's experiential, interpersonal and texual codal selections often remained the same for several sentences. We called this chunk: a 'phase'. The children's phases sometimes began and ended quite abruptly, and were totally unique in their particular tri-functional patterning. However, occasionally they began or ended more gradually: with a formulaic question, perhaps, such as "D'ya know what?". This we called a 'transition', specifically a transition in. Phasal analysis has proved an invaluable tool in the analyses of discourse and dialogue. It details the tri-functional codal selections made, but then enables analysts to go beyond such a micro analysis and make broader statements about how the dynamic instantiation of registerial consistencies called phases

sometimes 'structures' the discourse by forming strings of continuous or discontinuous phases.

2.1.Discourse

Elsewhere I have analyzed four ten minute conversations between adult dyads: two between 'friends' (people who have known each other prior to the recording), and two between 'strangers' (people who have not known each other previously) (Malcolm 1985). Adult conversation (as compared to that of the six-year-olds analyzed: the other half of the corpus) was characterized by comparatively lengthy sentences (10-20 words), with lots of embedding and clause complexes, making up relatively long phases (averaging 20 sentences in length). Semologically, the phases were quite varied experientially (with a variety of process types, and a few circumstances), quite consistent interpersonally (mostly statements, with consistent event mediation), and textually (coherent in terms of endophoric cohesive devices and gnostological exophora, with minimal theme-marking) (see Malcolm 1984). Transitions often marked the beginnings and endings of the adults' phases. Sometimes the phases were cooperatively shared (dialogic control); sometimes they were not (monologic control). Occasionally isolated phases occurred, but generally phases formed 'strings', where one or more feature(s) remained consistent throughout (or progressed in a very gradual, natural fashion) as others changed, marking phasal boundaries. The conversation of adult 'friends' was much more likely to jump from one set of phasal consistencies to another and back again in discontinuous phasal strings than that of 'strangers' which

seemed to progress block by block, offering somewhat of a beginning, middle, and end discoursal scheme. Strangers' talk was syntactically distinct as well. Nouns were more often modified and qualified, secondary predications were more numerous, endophoric cohesion[4] was more important than exophoric coherence[5]. Phases were longer too, as there seemed to be an onus on the stranger to 'complete' sentences, phases, and phasal strings to facilitate decoding. Strangers' lexis was more generalized (see Malcolm 1985 for further details).

2.2. Dialogue

For the prose selections I chose extended passages of dialogue from the fictions of five well-known contemporary Canadian writers: Kroetsch, Watson, Laurence, MacLennan, and Atwood. Semological and syntactic variation was quite predictable, but the nature of their phases and phasal strings was not.

2.2.i. Kroetsch

One of the more stylistically innovative of contemporary Canadian authors, Kroetsch was the only writer in my corpus who used discontinuous phasal strings in his prose dialogue. In the passage I analyzed from Badlands (1975: 204), comprised of thirty sentences, Phase I returned three times. This phase was characterized by compound sentences, non-finite clauses, action processes, place circumstances, personal reference, lexical collocation, expletives and lexis pertaining to fish, landscape, and weather. It was entirely spoken by speaker A: Webb. (P.= phase; S.= sentence)

P.I S. 1 "Goddamned goldeyes.
2 They were coming down like hailstones.
11 And Web: "It was raining fish all around us; goddamned goldeyes coming down all around us, bouncing around, slapping and leaping up there and the water coming down by the bucketful; and then we were rolling uphill."
13 We were up on top of that butte in the sagebrush and cactus and dozens of fish leaping around us; there was enough water up there on top of that butte, they could damned near swim."

Phase IV was also discontinuous, action and verbally oriented, by speaker B:Tune.

P.IV S. 6 "Come on, Webb, " Tune said.
12 "Come on," Tune said.

The narrative Phase V was discontinuous as well, but like Phase IV, it included so little text it did not represent returning or interweaving threads in the same way as Phase I.

P.V S. 10 Dawe saying nothing.
20 Dawe said nothing.

Phases II, III, and VI, although tri-functionally distinct, were spoken by both speakers. These three phases showed a certain degree of commonality: a variety in transitivity selections, the continuous aspect and declarative mood, but they were distinct in terms of predicational roles, lexis and cohesive device. Phase II included various action and mental processes with beneficiaries; parts of the body and death lexis, nominal ellipsis.

P.II S. 3 Could have broke my back"
4 "I thought you were looking at the sky," Tune said.
5 "Threw myself down in that grave to protect Anna".

In Phase III mental processes of verbalization and a relational process realized the primary predications[6], with action processes embedded in the secondary predications involving direct speech. Lexis concerning food, drugs and insanity, and nominal ellipsis were also featured.

P.III S. 7 "You've been chewing locoweed."
8 " Goddamned chinaman, it's the only thing he hasn't fed us."
9 "Something hit you on the head," Tune said.

In Phase VI verbalization also took the forefront with action secondary, but circumstances were embedded in the actual dialogue ("If I could do it 'again' ... 'in the mud'" : time and place). Lexis was animal and sexual; verbal substitution was used cohesively.

P.VI S. 14 Web winded and puffing the words into the mocking stillness of the tent: "If I could do it again, I'd be a hog, wallowing in the mud."
15 "You look like you made it," Tune said.

Phases VII and VIII were similar in sentence structure sequence, and cohesively, involving ellipsis, but Phase VII included action and mental processes as well as relational ones, and Phase VIII was very distinct lexically and cohesively with its repetition of 'inside'.

P.VII S.16 "You won't believe this," Web said.
17 "First time I came I was in a gopher hole.
18 Fucking for dear life.
19 Wasn't half bad.
21 "Pure accident," Web said.
22 "Didn't intend it that way.
23 Wind blowing fit to take the end links off a logging chain.
24 Nothing to hang onto but cactus.
25 "Must have been a badger hole," Tune said.

P.VIII S. 26 "And then we were inside," Web said
27 "Inside what?"
28 "Inside the twister.
29 We were inside.
30 Right dead inside."

Phases VII and VIII were separated by the only transition in the text (sentence 26), which anticipated the 'inside' concern of Phase VIII, but reviewed the 'hole' concern of Phase VII.

The other four passages analyzed were much more conservative: the phases were isolated for the most part, with the occasional continuous string. If Kroetsch's passage was reminiscent of the casual conversation between friends, in terms of its discontinuous phasal strings and 'jumps' from one to the other: the others were more like the conversations of strangers, where completeness and orderliness were prerequisites, given the time restriction inherent in the reading process and possible lack of gnostological 'connectedness' between reader and writer.

Writers, like strangers, do not know their readers/decoders' backgrounds; hence, they prepare for the 'worst': someone who needs virtually everything spelled out, a reader who must have 'all the words', all the fictional character's conversational means actually encoded in as straightforward a way as possible. Often, transitions in and out of almost every phase ease the reader into a new pattern gently, and then prepare him/her for something different. That so many writers depend on this discoursal structuring device is not very surprising given the demands of that particular medium. In fact, in some ways the dialogue of

the fictional characters is even more similar to the casual conversation of children than to that of adults: most notably in its economy and consistency.

2.2.ii.Watson

In Watson's passage of prose dialogue, taken from her story "Brother Oedipus" (1979: 14), the thirty-three sentences can be described in six phases. Phase I, only two sentences in length, is characterized by mental processes as primary predications, and a variety of process types and circumstances in the secondary predications. Exophoric reference (in terms of this particular passage only), and talk and money lexis distinguish it from Phase II.

P.I. S. 1 "We were talking," said Oedipus, "when you came in about the cost of living."
2 "The point under discussion," said our mother, "is the cost of dying"

Phase II, including eleven sentences and transitions in and out (sentences 3 and 12-13), is characterized by varied sentence structure sequence, a predominance of mental processes, with a few relational, lexical repetition as a cohesive device, and conceptual sets relating to tree, cutting, business, and money. Puss' wife and mother are the encoders.

P.2 S.3 "The tree must go and you must pay to have it removed.
4 You must pay, too, for the repair of my drains.
5 This is not a subject I care to dwell upon."
6 "But we must dwell on it," said Puss' wife.
7 "We must face up to facts -- all of us.
8 Are you asking us to sacrifice the tree and to pay for the sacrifice in the bargain?"
9 "Nothing could be clearer," said our mother.
10 "The property will decline in value," said Puss' wife.
11 "The tree is an asset -- valuable landscaping.
12 It shades the garden and insures privacy.
13 Besides we must get a tree surgeon.

Phase III, four sentences by Oedipus, includes a variety of process types; lexis concerning surgeon, nature, and philosophy; a variety of cohesive devices and rhetorical figures (seriation, apposition). The transition in includes the first two sentences.

P.3 S.14 "I said nothing about a tree surgeon," said our mother.
15 "I merely said to have the tree cut down."
16 "A surgeon," said Oedipus, "interferes with the natural cycle of growth and decay.
17 He is a thing monstrous in nature and tolerable only because of the perverted philosophy which we inherit from that barbarous age, the age of reason.
18 That age set loose a whole pack of surgeons -- the economist, the social reformer, the town planner, the street cleaner, the organizer of departments of public works and the curriculum reformer.
19 Behind it all I see the bland-faced Locke with theories of equal rights and baths for everybody."

Phase IV includes mental processes for the most part, various cohesive devices, and lexis pertaining to drinking, emotions, and the church.

P.IV S.20 "You have been drinking," said our mother.
21 "He needs an outlet for his emotions," said Puss' wife.
22 "I have asked him to return to the church -- a church-- I don't care which.
23 He can choose which he likes and I will go with him.

Phase V is even more personal, as relational processes, emotional lexis, and personal reference are featured.

P.V S.24 That's his trouble."
25 "His trouble is that I spoiled him," said our mother.
26 "He was a bright boy.
27 I was strict as I knew how to be, but not strict enough -- or too strict as the books would tell me now."

Phase VI, spoken by Oedipus and his mother, returns to the mental processes seen elsewhere, but now in the context of school, money, and past lexical items, bound together by collocation and verbal ellipsis.

P.VI S.28 "You paid no attention to us at all," said Oedipus.
29 "We grew up as we could."
30 "You remember only the most unpleasant things," said our mother.
31 "Children have most unfortunate memories.
32 At least, Oedipus, we paid your school bills.
33 Your masters should have taught you something."

The phases are distinct, but the stylistic range is narrow making transitions largely unnecessary.

2.2.iii. Laurence

The phases in the passage from Laurence's The Stone Angel (1967: 136) are even simpler than Watson's: sentences are seldom more than a few words in length, and phases a few sentences. Phase I, including three sentences, two of which are narrative, is realized primarily by action processes, lexis pertaining to body parts, and exophoric verbal ellipsis.

P.I S.I "Mother -- come on."
2 A voice, and a hand shaking my shoulder.
3 Startled, I draw away.

Phase II, introduced by an interrogative transition, reminiscent of the children's formulae mentioned earlier, includes processes of mental verbalization and relational identification. Lexical repetition ties the conceptual sets of time, waking, and feelings, together. Declarative, interrogative and imperative mood choices characterize this phase.

P.II S.4 "Eh? What is it?"
5 "It's time," Doris says, with forced patience.
6 "Come on, now."
7 "Mercy, it can't be time to get up yet, can it?"
8 "To get up!" she whinnies.
9 "It's dinner time, not morning."

As in all but Phase I, Doris and her mother both participate in the eleven sentences of Phase III which include a transition in and out. Relational processes of attribution replace those of identification, and a variety of mental processes add to the verbalization of Phase II, and all are tempered by a variety of modality selections. The waking set is further developed, but now verbal ellipsis and substitution account for some of the phase's cohesive properties.

P.III S.10 "Of course, " I come back at her quickly.
11 "I'm well aware of that.
12 I only meant --"
13 "You must have dozed," she says.
14 "It'll do you good."
15 "I never did.
16 I was wide awake."
17 "It must have relaxed you, talking with Mr. Troy.
18 That's fine.
19 I thought it would."
20 "With Mister who?"

Phase IV, seven sentences long, with a transition in and out (sentences 21, 22 and 27), includes predominately action processes tempered by future intention, and food lexis. A new participant is introduced: Marv.

P.IV S.21 "Oh Lord.
22 Never mind.
23 Come on now.
24 Marv's waiting.
25 The meat loaf will be stone cold.

26 After we've eaten Doris announces she's going to the corner store for ginger ale.
27 "I'll come along."

Phase V replaces action with mental reaction, lexical collocation with verbal ellipsis and substitution, food lexis with 'feeling up to it'.

P.V S.28 Suddenly I feel the need to stretch my legs and get a breath of air
29 "Well -- If you feel up to it --."
30 She seems doubtful.
31 "Of course I do.
32 "Why shouldn't I?"
33 "Oh, all right.
34 I thought you'd stay and talk to Marv."

As in the Watson text, the phases are isolated, but here transitions in and out of almost every phase lead the reader very gradually from one to the next. That both encoders participate equally in virtually every phase also contributes to a stylistic predictability that facilitates decoding. Interestingly, Phases II and IV each include at least one transition that is marked by a shift in mood, or a shift from dialogue to narration.

2.2.iv. MacLennan

MacLennan's passage from Two Solitudes (1945:159) contains seven phases, approximately four sentences in length each, two of which are transitions in and out. Phase I is actually somewhat longer, largely as a consequence of what I have called an extended transition in (sentences 1-3). Had sentences two and three been as fully developed as sentence one, rather than single word questions, they may well have been considered a separate phase entirely, but as it stands, they seem to lead into Phase I proper. The Phase, dominated by the priest's words, includes a variety of relational

processes as the primary predications, with a variety of mental processes embedded as secondary. Ellipsis and personal reference account for the phase's cohesion, and lexically, little is specific except the absent participant: Athanase's son. Had the question in sentence eight been answered, it likely would have been considered a transition into a new phase, rather than a transition out of Phase I.

P.I S.I Without preliminaries this time the priest said, "I've been talking to your son again, Mr. Tallard."
2 "Marius?
3 Where?"
4 "That's unimportant.
5 He is well, so far as his health is concerned.
6 But he doesn't want to see you now, and I don't think he should.
7 Later, perhaps, I hope he will see things differently."
8 "Is he still in the village?"

The transitions in and out of Phase II (sentences 9 and 12) are both narrative, which supports the action and spatial focus of the passage. Proper names and furniture comprise the lexis, and lexical repetition ties it together.

P.II S.9 The priest looked about the room and Athanase offered him a chair.
10 "I didn't come here to speak of Marius, Mr. Tallard.
11 I came to speak of you."
12 Athanase knocked the dead ashes from his pipe.

The transitions in and out of Phase III (sentences 13 and 16), like Phase I, are questions by speaker B: Athanase, with the priest's answer to the first comprising the Phase proper. Mental and action processes, and land lexis characterize this phase.

P.III S.13 "Well?"
14 "I've been talking to Tremblay.
15 And some of the farmers whose land you propose to take away."
16 "Well?

Phase IV has a transition out only, another question by speaker B. Mental processes are no longer featured, the land is specified as Saint-Marc, and verbal substitution and extended reference bind the phase together.

P.IV S.17 "You can't do this to Saint-Marc, Mr. Tallard.
18 You know that as well as I do."
19 "What can't I do?"

Phase V involves two narrative sentences with action processes, place circumstances, personal reference, and conceptual sets concerning priest, parts of the body, furniture and dress.

P.V. S.20 The priest made a gesture of impatience but immediately his hand returned to the lap of his soutane.
21 Spreading his legs under the black cloth he leaned forward in his chair.

The cataphoric signal 'it' in the transition in anticipates the introduction of legal lexis in Phase VI. In this phase, both the transtion in and out (sentences 22 and 27-28) are uttered by speaker A. Process types are mixed, and lexical collocation is important cohesively.

P.VI S.22 "I know all about it," he said.
23 "The details make no difference.
24 You're trying to build a factory here."
25 "Is that against the law?"
26 "Lawyers' arguments are useless with me.
27 Are you, or are you not, planning to buy the Tremblay land for a factory?"
28 "And if I am?"

The transition out of Phase VI also acts like a transition in to Phase VII. Phase VII is about buying and selling. Lexical repetition contributes to the cohesion. Future intention tempers verbalization.

P.VII S. 29 "I will tell Tremblay not to sell.
30 I will tell every farmer you have already talked to not to sell."
31 Athanase flushed and rose from his chair.

This passage covers quite a range of events and participants, in quite a range of tri-functional choices. It is very tightly structured though, in terms of its discourse capabilities. Transitions make up half the short phases as the reader is guided through a maze of information. And as in the passage by Laurence, new phases are often signalled by changes in mood, changes from dialogue to narration, or in this case, a change of speaker. In this passage, unlike the others, there is a real disparity in the power held by the interlocutors. Until sentence twenty-seven, speaker B seems to be in the dark, and remains so, despite the questions he raises.

2.2.v. Atwood

The final passage, from Surfacing (1973: 94), is structured as tightly as MacLennan's in terms of five short phases with transitions everywhere, as Atwood relays a myriad of detail in even more complex sentences. The transition into Phase I (sentence 1) includes a question by Speaker A. The transition out includes an unanswered question in direct speech by speaker A and a narrative sentence (8 and 9). The Phase proper is distinguished by an equal split between mental and relational processes at primary predication, with

numerous mental processes within the secondary predications, and a few manner circumstances. Lexical sets pertain to American place names, business associations, and verbalization, primarily. Lexical relations account for the cohesive power of the phase.

P.1 S.I "Where are you from?" I asked, trying to be polite.
2 " Michigan," he said as though it was something to be proud of.
3 " I'm a member of the Detroit branch of the Wildlife Protection Association of America; we have a branch in this country, quite a flourishing little branch."
4 He beamed at me, condescending.
5 "As a matter of fact that's what I wanted to discuss with you.
6 Our place on Lake Erie is, ah, giving out so to say.
7 I believe I can speak for the rest of the Michigan members in saying we'd be prepared to make you an offer."
8 "What for?" I said.
9 He sounded as though he wanted me to buy something, a magazine or membership.

Beginning with a narrative transition in (sentence 10), Phase II includes action processes, nature/retreat lexis, and lexical collocation as the primary cohesive device.

P.II S.10 He swept his pipe in a semi-circle.
11 "This lovely piece of property," he said.
12 "What we'd use it for would be a kind of retreat lodge, where the members could meditate and observe," he puffed, "the beauties of Nature.
13 And maybe do a little hunting and fishing."

Phase III begins with a transtition in question by speaker A (sentences 14 and 15), and ends with a narrative transition out (sentence 18). Mental processes predominate, and time is featured. House lexis is the focus.

P.III S.14 "Don't you want to see it?" I asked.
15 "I mean, the house and all."
16 "I must admit that I've already seen it: we've had our eye on this piece for quite some time.

17 I've been coming up here to fish for years and I've taken the liberty, when no one seemed to be here, of having a stroll around."
18 He gave a small harumph, a voyeur of good social standing caught in the act; then he named a price that meant I could forget about Quebec Folk Tales and children's books and everything else, at least for a while.

Phase IV also has a question by speaker A, a transition in (sentences 19 and 20), but in this case, the out is a comment by the same speaker (sentence 22). In all but Phase V, speaker A's words merely provide the motivating and concluding frame for speaker B's response which accounts for the selections within the phase proper. Phase IV is marked by a fairly even distribution in all three process types although secondary predications are usually mental. The house lexis of the previous phase is further developed, by adding building and utility conceptual sets. The transition out re-introduces time. Lexical relations still account for the binding power of the phase.

P.IV S.19 "Would you change it?" I asked.
20 I foresaw motels, highrises.
21 "Well, we'd have to install a power generator, of course, and a septic tank; but apart from that, no, I expect we'd like to leave it the way it is, it has a definite," he stroked his moustache, "rural charm."
22 "I'm sorry but it's not for sale," I said, "not right now; maybe later."

In Phase V, characterized by thought more than direct speech, other than the transition out, all process types are still important, but the experiential shift is to action. Legal, business, and mortality conceptual sets are now important. As in many of the phases, conjunction contributes to the intersentential cohesion of the passage.

21

P.V S.23 If my father had been dead he might have liked the proposal but as it was he would be furious if he returned and found I'd sold his house.
24 I wasn't sure I'd be the owner in any case.
25 There must be deeds hidden, property titles, legal papers, I'd have to sign forms or charters, I might have to pay death duties.
26 "Well," he said with the heartiness of the loser.
27 "I'm sure the offer will still be open.
28 Indefinitely, you might say."
29 He drew out his wallet and gave me a card: Bill Malmstrom, Teenie Town, it said, Togs for Toddlers 'n Tots.
30 "Thank-you," I said, "I'll keep it in mind"

Textually, then the phases are not very different from one another. However, the speech function and particular speaker often draw distinct boundaries between discrete experientially defined phases. In this first person narrative passage speaker A controls the movement of the dialogue by his questions, and mirrors the emotional responses by his thoughts; speaker B describes the setting and initiates some minor complications which serve to develop the principal characters and advance the plot.

3. Conclusions

Phasal analysis can contribute significantly to the comparison between casual conversation and fictional dialogue. Although numerous contemporary analysts have come to the conclusion that the latter is, by necessity, only a representation, not a reproduction, it has been difficult to identify exactly how writers have selectively condensed the essence of real talk to create the illusion of authenticity. Chothia believes they do so by consistently incorporating appropriate 'speech markers' from the living language into the patterned

conventions of the written mode, blending the expected with the unexpected. Phasal analysis has revealed something more, something the original encoders were probably not even aware of. In the current corpus, few writers take the risk of creating discontinuous phasal strings in their dialogue. Like the conversation of strangers and even children, they seem to cope with the challenge of creating a whole new world of characters and action (complete with its respective instantial situations and gnostologies), without knowing to what extent it is shared by their potential readers, by writing in a very structured and predictable way. Not only are their sentences often shorter and simpler than those of adult interlocutors, but so are their phases. And in the situations where the characters, for whatever reason, do not share the power equally, phases are often manifested by a single speaker, the one with the power. The ones without guide the reader from one set of tri-functional consistencies to the next by transitions in and out. Moreover, these are often predictable transitions, like those of children: including changes of mood, narrative mode, or speaker. Even when both interlocutors share the power, it is often the job of one particular speaker to introduce the new, and complete the old. And most authors seem to rely on isolated phases, which are complete in themselves, and do not place rigorous demands on their readers' short term memories. Phasal analysis, then, shows how dialogue is organized beyond the sentence, and structured even beyond the graphological conventions with which authors generally comply (an indentation with every change of speaker). Everything and anything to facilitate decoding.

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Footnotes

1. Gnostology - the hypothetical construct that describes where interlocutors store linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge that is a product of their individual and shared experiences of prior situations, and their cultural expectations

2. Semology - the 'meaning' stratum of the realizatory code that describes matters of dialect, register, code, discoursal schema, predicational roles, speech function, cohesion, focus and prominence

3. Morphosyntax - the stratum of the realizatory code in which matters of transitivity, mood, and theme capture the 'wording' of the discourse

4. Endophora - the text forming component of the linguistic code which operates intersententially, is signalled within the discourse by omissions etc., and is satisfied by recourse to the discourse

5. Exophora - those presupposing relationships that give a text 'coherence'and are satisfied non-linguistically by recourse to either the immediate instantial situation, or the non-instantial gnostolgy

6. Predication - the semological classification that refers to a single process and its attending roles; ie. 'He walks.' - actor + action process
'She thinks' - processor + mental process
Primary predication = main clause; Secondary predication = embedded clause

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